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BOOK REVIEWS

Mathematics and Life Activities. Suggestions for Students of Mathematics, prepared by the Department of Mathematics of Brown University. Providence, R. I., 1921, pp. 7.

Teachers of mathematics in secondary schools as well as colleges owe a debt of gratitude to Brown University for having published this pamphlet, filled as it is with excellent counsel to students who are planning their work, not merely in mathematics as a science, but in mathematics as an aid to success in other lines. It suggests the benefits to be derived from the study of mathematics, and this with entire freedom from undue claims and in a language that does not require a technical educational vocabulary for its comprehension. It suggests the methods which are helpful to students, not merely in the college but in the secondary school as well. And finally, it considers those occupations which require mathematics for their successful pursuit, and in connection with each of these occupations it sets forth the courses that may be taken with the greatest profit.

Although they are intended primarily for college students, so important are the suggestions as to methods of study that, with the permission of the Department they are here reproduced:

SUGGESTIONS AS TO METHODS OF STUDYING MATHEMATICS

“Every student has his own peculiar mental characteristics and must find out for himself what methods of study, in his own case, yield the best results. The following suggestions, however, have proved their general value and should be carefully considered.

“1. *Concentrate on your work during your time for study.* The power of focusing attention for an extended period of time is one of the most valuable things that college can contribute, and this habit will do much to assure your success either in the college or in the world. .

“2. *Do not allow avoidable interruptions by yourself or others.* A little will-power enables a student to ignore minor disturb-

ances and distractions. Education is a part of your business in life and in the acquiring of it you should form business habits.

“3. *Feel sure of success.* Few intelligent and industrious students are unable to comprehend fundamental processes of mathematical reasoning. If you are discouraged, consult with an instructor as to the cause of your difficulties and the remedy for your lack of success.

“4. *Reflect as you read.* Learning by rote contributes little to educational development, and the habitual performance of tasks in a mechanical way leads to intellectual atrophy.

“5. *Be mentally alert, active and aggressive.* Apply the principles of the lessons to concrete problems; such application is the test of understanding and requires effort and initiative.

“6. *Enjoy overcoming obstacles.* It is worth while in itself, gives power for surmounting new obstacles, and is good preparation for success in life. Love of difficulty is essential to high attainment.

“7. *Work alone at least part of the time.* Discuss the subject with fellow students, but think it over and do detailed work by yourself, both before and after such discussion.

“8. *Attend class regularly.* Prepare each lesson regularly and systematically. In the logical development of the subject each lesson plays its part so that a lack of understanding of earlier work is a bar to progress.

“9. *Devote enough time to study.* The length and difficulty of the assignments and the severity of the marking are intended to be such that a student of average ability and preparation, studying each lesson from an hour and a half to two hours, will receive the grade C. A student deficient in either ability or preparation must be content with less than this grade unless he devotes more time to study.”

The bulletin should be in the hands of all who have to do with elective courses in our high schools.

DAVID EUGENE SMITH